



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Concerned By Second Mad Cow Case, Kind Urges USDA to Reconsider Easing Ban on Canadian Beef

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) today sent the following letter to Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, urging the USDA to reconsider the recent decision to fully lift the ban on Canadian imports of beef. The decision comes in the wake of a second confirmed case of mad cow in Canada.

January 4, 2005

Honorable Ann Veneman, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th Street & Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Veneman:

In light of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's recent announced testing of a second dairy cow suspected of having mad cow disease, I urge the USDA reconsider fully re-opening U.S. borders to live beef imports March 7, 2005.

Madam Secretary, I believe the USDA's priority should be the welfare of U.S. farmers, ranchers, and our consumers. Therefore, the decision to reopen the border should be based on science and not an arbitrary deadline set by extraneous political considerations. Confidence in the safety of our beef industry by Americans, as well as our export countries, has been steadily rebuilt since December 2003, when a dairy cow in Washington State tested positive for mad cow disease. Fully reopening the Canadian border to live beef imports at the very time a second case of mad cow disease has been discovered would work contrary to this recovery.

In addition to the second case of a BSE infected animal, recent news that Canadian feed inspectors have found blood, bone fragments and other animal materials in 41 out of 70 samples of vegetable-based feed should give the U.S. further pause. This study shows the United States must require greater feed ban enforcement by Canadian officials that matches our own compliance efforts before the border is opened.

Furthermore, many of the USDA's new import rules have provided sound safeguards and should continue to be enforced and strengthened. Requiring that any Canadian cattle shipped to the United States to be slaughtered by the age of the 30 months is a prudent measure fully supported by the scientific community and should continue to be compulsory. I also urge the administration maintain the current Food and Drug Administration interim rule that bans of the use of mammalian blood and "specified risk material," including the brain, skull, eyes, spinal cord, and other organs from cattle over 30 months of age.

Finally, let me add my hope the administration will revisit its position on mandatory country of origin food labeling, without which consumers will continue to be denied the ability to differentiate between U.S. and imported products. I strongly believe consumers deserve to know where their food is grown and processed, and producers deserve the opportunity to differentiate their products from foreign imports.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to these requests; I look forward to your written response.

Sincerely,

Ron Kind
Member of Congress